

AMERICAN TEXTILE
MANUFACTURERS INSTITUTE

January 31, 2002

Mr. Steve Ecklund
Federal Trade Commission
Division of Enforcement
Washington, DC 20580

Re: Request for FTC Staff
Opinion on Yarn Count

Dear Mr. Ecklund:

It has come to our attention again that some companies are marketing bed sheets and pillowcases to U.S. consumers where extremely high yarn or thread counts are claimed – some as high as 1000 count. We believe these products are mislabeled, creating deceptive information for the consumer.

Labeling these products based on a count that includes each ply in plied yarns deceives the customer into believing that bedding products with higher counts are better when, in fact, they might be inferior because of the method used to determine the count. We wrote to the Commission regarding this same issue on February 24, 1997 (copy enclosed) and provided a fabric sample and independent lab report verifying our position.

In many cases, these extremely high counts are achieved by counting yarns within a ply as individual yarns, thus dramatically increasing the number of yarns in a square inch of fabric. A plied yarn is one in which two or more yarns are twisted together to form a single strand.

ATMI believes this method of labeling products based on counting each individual yarn in plies to be a deceptive practice, which misleads the American



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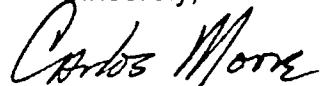
public into making decisions to purchase items, based on false and misleading information.

ASTM method D 3775-96 (Standard Test Method for Fabric Count of Woven Fabric) is the long-accepted industry standard for determining count. This method has been in use in this country for many years and serves as the industry's standard way to report the count of many woven textile fabrics, including sheeting. It is based on the number of yarns in the warp direction and filling direction, regardless of ply, and has become an important parameter used by consumers to judge the quality of sheeting products, since the higher the count, the more luxurious the product.

ATMI believes that any information provided to the consumer should be true and correct so as not to be deceptive or mis-leading. We believe that plied yarns are properly counted as only one yarn. For example, a fabric containing 250 individual four ply yarns in a square inch would be described as a "250 thread count fabric, even though each thread or yarn contained four plies twisted together." It would be false and mis-leading to describe this as a 1000 thread count product.

ATMI requests a staff opinion from the Federal Trade Commission on this issue. We believe that manufacturers, importers and retailers of bed sheets should rely on the ASTM D3775-96 standard test method to determine count.

Sincerely,



Carlos Moore
Executive Vice President

Enclosure